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SUBJECT: OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL: STATEMENT ON DEPORTATION OF NORWEGIAN HELSINKI COMMITTEE REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

¶1. Post is authorized to make the following statement at the October 16, 2008, meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna:

Begin Text:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States joins Norway and the EU in expressing its concern about recent actions taken by Kyrgyz authorities against Mr. Ivar Dale, the representative of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee in Bishkek.

According to the OSCE Center in Bishkek, Kyrgyz law enforcement officials on October 12th denied Mr. Dale entry into Kyrgyzstan at Bishkek's airport without providing any official explanation. Mr. Dale was told that he would be banned entry into Kyrgyzstan for a period of ten years.

This incident follows a series of actions targeted at the Norwegian Helsinki Committee by Kyrgyz authorities, including a June 9th raid of the Committee's office and an administrative case brought against Mr. Dale this summer. Actions of this nature lead to an environment of fear and mistrust for nNon-Governmental Organizations and other international organizations operating in Kyrgyzstan. It is important for the democratic development of all participating States that Kyrgyzstan that civil society be allowed to function freely. e all agreed to provide opportunities for increased involvement of NGOs in OSCE activities as foreseen in Chapter IV of the Helsinki Document of 1992, and is hard to see how this decision is in accordance with the spirit of that commitment. and that NGO representatives be granted the visas to work within the country.

We urge Kyrgyzstan to reconsider this step, and join us in a commitment to provide to the OSCE an explanation for the deportation of Mr. Dale, and to ensure that NGOs are allowed to operate openly and conduct their peaceful work without intimidation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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